



# 2016 Annual Report

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Protecting, Developing, and Conserving  
Arkansas's Forests





District 6 Crew Assists Crawford County Landowners



AFC Attendees at Prescribed Fire School



Forest Inventory and Analysis Crew



District 2 Crew Lead Nashville Tree Planting



District Foresters Honor the Career of Ray Wakefield



District 3 Crew Trains Fire Departments

## Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas's Forests



### **Arkansas Forestry Commission Mission Statement**

The mission of the Arkansas Forestry Commission is to protect Arkansas's forests, and those who enjoy them, from wildland fire and natural hazards, while promoting rural and urban forest health, stewardship, development and conservation for all generations of Arkansans.



AFC New Employee Orientation Class, 2016

### **Vision Statement**

Arkansas's healthy rural and urban forests provide clean air and water, functioning ecosystems, and economic and social benefits. An agency of leaders in forest protection, emergency response, and forest management is committed to maintaining and enhancing these attributes.





# Welcome from State Forester Joe Fox

Welcome to the Arkansas Forestry Commission’s annual report for 2016. The Arkansas Forestry Commission is an agency within the Arkansas Agriculture Department, which has served Arkansans for 86 years. 2016 was a year of renewed energy within the forest industry; continued growth of Arkansas forests; the addition and training of many new staff members; continued strengthening of partnerships to build more forestry successes for Arkansas and the south; and a year of unique wildfire frequency – with low frequency overall, and very active times during drought periods in late fall and early winter.

Major 2016 accomplishments: the replacement of all analog technology radio tower repeaters with digital technology. The completion of at least 251,247 acres of prescribed burning for safer, healthier Arkansas forests. The provision of over \$7.9 million in equipment to rural fire departments. We worked with landowners to enroll 901,819 acres in the Forest Stewardship Program. We trained more than 200 Arkansans in urban forestry programs that restore our urban tree canopies and plant and create natural areas in our communities. We improved our Fire and Activities Reporting website, which allows our foresters and rangers to map all activities. We monitored the movement of forest pests like emerald ash borer (which is expanding in Arkansas) and southern pine beetle (which is not). We began the process of third-party certification with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) for our Poison Springs State Forest. We also safely and successfully suppressed 1,248 wildfires.

AFC continues to execute its strategic plan in expanding our fleet of trained personnel and environmental cab dozers, offering a fully comprehensive website, reaching out to minority landowners, organizing Firewise and Tree City, USA communities, working with partners to strengthen forest industry through forest data compilation and research, and in building relationships between our awesome team of professionals and Arkansans – the primary landowners of our forests. We are proud of our work in 2016 and are dedicated to continued improvement and growth in the years to come. Please enjoy our report to Governor Hutchinson and you, the citizens we serve.

Sincerely,  
  
State Forester Joe Fox



State Forester Joe Fox participates with Congressman Bruce Westerman, Senator John Boozman, Dr. Jim Gulden and U.S. Forest Service Crossett Experimental Forest staff on the 2016 Seed to Sawmill Tour

## Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas’s Forests

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Please note: All accomplishments reported in these pages are from Calendar Year, 2016, except for the Administration and Fiscal Reports - which are from Fiscal Year, 2015 (July, 2015- June, 2016).



Conway Arbor Day



Drew County Prescribed Burn



Mountain Pine Safety Day



Southern Pine Beetle Survey





## 2016 Board of Commissioners

Board Chair, Robert Parkes, D.D.S.

Vice Chair, Aubra Anthony

Allen Bedell

Ray Dillon

Mary Elizabeth Eldridge

Delia Haak

Bobby Johnson

Sam Snead

Frank Wilson



AFC Commissioners from left to right: Bobby Johnson, Aubra Anthony, Sam Snead, Frank Wilson, Ray Dillion, Mary Elizabeth Eldridge, Allen Bedell, Robert Parkes, and Delia Haak

Tree Farm Program Award Ceremony



## 2016 Accomplishment Highlights

|                                 |        |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| Landowner Assists (of any kind) | 2,453  |
| Management Plans Prepared       | 957    |
| Management Plan Acres           | 73,723 |
| Prescribed Burn Acres           | 12,374 |
| New Fire Lanes Installed        | 178    |
| School Programs                 | 255    |
| Residential Tree Assists        | 175    |
| Arbor Day Activities            | 42     |
| Newspaper Articles Published    | 93     |
| Community Meetings Attended     | 526    |
| County Fairs/Festivals Attended | 136    |
| Contacts to AFC Law Enforcement | 121    |



Randolph County Safety Day



Howard County Presentation





Franklin County Wildfire - the Largest Wildfire of 2016 (1,001 Acres Burned, Near Fort Smith, Nov. 17)

## Forest Resource Protection

The Forest Protection Program protects rural communities and forest resources by providing wildland fire prevention, detection, suppression, enforcement, training, and equipment.

### Wildfires at a Glance 2011-2016

The total count of wildfires recorded across the state in 2016 was 1,248 wildfires, on 19,045 acres.

| Year | Number | Total Area Burned | Average Fire Size |
|------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 2011 | 2,435  | 41,783            | 17.16 acres       |
| 2012 | 2,148  | 34,434            | 16.00 acres       |
| 2013 | 787    | 11,261            | 14.30 acres       |
| 2014 | 1,240  | 16,687            | 13.5 acres        |
| 2015 | 1,178  | 14,653            | 12.4 acres        |
| 2016 | 1,248  | 19,045            | 15.3 acres        |



Sebastian County Wildfire

### Fire Protection

The AFC is responsible for the protection of over 16 million acres of non-federal forestland in Arkansas. Foresters and rangers in the eight districts are involved daily in one or more of the four key activities of wildfire protection: prevention, pre-suppression, detection, and suppression. 2016 was another relatively low year for wildfire frequency in Arkansas, with the most recent high wildfire frequency year still being 2012 when 34,434 acres burned in 2,148 wildfires. The most common months for wildfire frequency in Arkansas are February – April and August – October, due to low humidity, dry vegetation, and gusty winds common for those months. Higher wildfire frequency in December of 2016 was related to drought conditions across most of Arkansas.

### Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas’s Forests



New White County Dozer and Transport

In 2016, the AFC had a total of 105 firefighting units, each comprised of a bulldozer and transport truck. Bulldozers are used to create firebreaks that stop an ongoing fire. Of those units, 80 are equipped with environmental cabs that provide added protection for the operator. Two new bulldozers were purchased in 2016 as follows: 2 JD550K dozers (White and Columbia Counties). Three JD550K dozers and 1 JD650K dozer are on order and not yet delivered (to be placed with crews in Craighead, Lafayette, Pulaski and Calhoun Counties).

### Arkansas Wildfires by Location

AFC Dispatch personnel compile wildfire data throughout the year according to wildfires by cause, frequency, and location. Counties with the most wildfires and most acreage consumed by wildfires were:

- Ashley County (31 wildfires, 425 acres)
- Baxter County (20 wildfires, 480 acres)
- Benton County (20 wildfires, 522 acres)
- Clark County (23 wildfires, 482 acres)
- Conway County (32 wildfires, 448 acres)
- Crawford County (41 wildfires, 402 acres)
- Drew County (17 wildfires, 649 acres)
- Franklin County (24 wildfires, 1458 acres)
- Fulton County (32 wildfires, 973 acres)
- Independence County (27 wildfires, 653 acres)
- Izard County (57 wildfires, 1383 acres)
- Madison County (19 wildfires, 459 acres)
- Nevada County (19 wildfires, 634 acres)
- Searcy County (34 wildfires, 1761 acres)
- Sharp County (30 wildfires, 429 acres)
- Van Buren County (31 wildfires, 432 acres)



Stone County Wildfire



Franklin County Wildfire Prevention Program



### Wildfire Statistics by Cause, 2016

| Cause of Fire              | Number of Fires | Acres Burned |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Debris Burning             | 574             | 8,109        |
| Incendiary Burning (Arson) | 337             | 7,031        |
| Miscellaneous Burns        | 169             | 2,441        |
| Equipment Use              | 95              | 925          |
| Lightning                  | 16              | 85           |
| Children                   | 20              | 89           |
| Smokers                    | 8               | 115          |
| Campfire                   | 21              | 213          |
| Railroad                   | 8               | 37           |

### Prescribed Burning

Prescribed (or controlled) burns are performed as weather permits to improve forest health and to reduce the risk of out-of-control wildfires in the future by removing highly combustible, dead vegetation. AFC Dispatch personnel compile annual data on the number of prescribed fires completed by AFC personnel, as well as prescribed fires reported by partners and private residents.

Prescribed burns reported to AFC Dispatch are also recorded online at [arfireinfo.org](http://arfireinfo.org) for landowners to reference.



Drew County Wildfire



Newton County Prescribed Burn



Single Engine Air Tanker (SEAT) Water Drop

### 2016 Prescribed Fire Acreage

| Landowner          | Total Burns | Acres Burned   |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Private            | 338         | 15,811         |
| Industrial         | 425         | 32,297         |
| State Government   | 338         | 31,496         |
| Federal Government | 278         | 171,643        |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>1373</b> | <b>251,247</b> |

### Communications

AFC Communications is responsible for ensuring reliable radio communications throughout the state for the safety and communications needs of AFC personnel. This requires routine maintenance of 52 VHF repeaters, 800 VHF radios, and 142 AWIN radios.

#### Digital Repeater

To date 100% of the old analog technology repeaters have been replaced with new P25 digital repeaters. The conversion to full digital will begin after P25 Aviation Radios are purchased.

#### New Systems in District 8 and District 3

Technicians have installed a new digital radio system consisting of numerous locations linked together to provide a better emergency route to District 8 and new radio control to District 3. Construction of the system continues and will eventually improve dispatch service throughout the state.

#### Radio Towers at Almond and McGehee

In cooperation with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, new 190’ radio towers have been completed at Almond and McGehee. AFC technicians relocated radio equipment from the old Almond Fire Tower to the new tower. This location will also serve as an emergency communications route for District 8 and control to District 3. Also an additional radio repeater was installed on the new McGehee tower. This will improve coverage in the southeast portion of the state. Both towers will improve radio communications to District 1 and 8. Eventually the Almond tower will serve as a control point for District 3.

#### Malvern Dispatch Center Generator

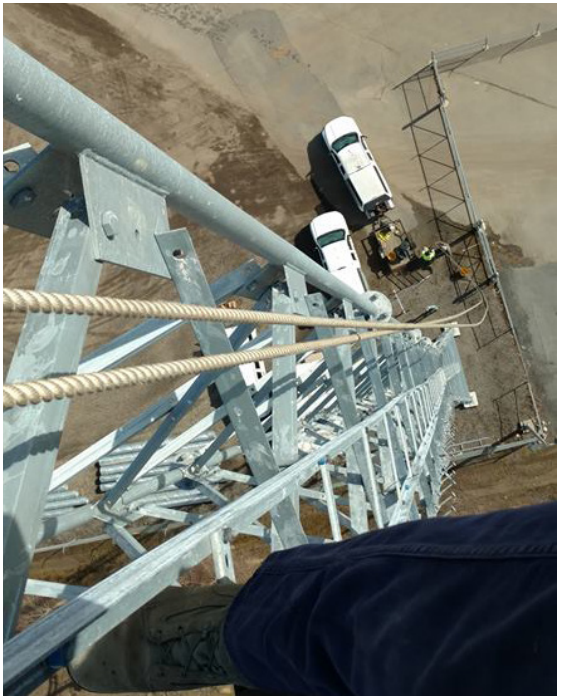
A new 35 Kw generator for the Malvern Dispatch Center has been purchased and will be installed soon. This will replace the aging 30 Kw generator. Plans are also underway to replace the numerous UPS Battery backup units with a standalone device (similar to the devices used at the AWIN sites). This will provide better power switching support during generator start up. Also, in 2016 the 12.5 Kw generator at the Bismarck location was replaced with a new 15Kw.

#### Dispatch AVTEC Consoles

All radio consoles at the Dispatch Center were replaced with new AVTEC consoles, capable of many different modes of operation including Radio Over IP. This has proved invaluable in adding District 3 and District 8 to central dispatch. Radio communications to many districts has improved significantly.

#### Aviation Training

AFC Communications held a training class for the Aviation crew. Subjects covered were radio etiquette and radio theory. Radio coverage to specific check points was mapped. Feedback from the pilots indicated a few problems in the northwest part of the state. With this, technicians were able to find problems with the antenna system at Mount Magazine. Changes were made and coverage to the NW part of the state was improved.



New Radio Tower in McGehee



### Aviation

The aviation department supports each of the eight AFC districts through aerial fire detection, timber damage surveys, insect and disease surveys, and through cooperation and partnerships with other state and federal agencies. Aviation operated 15 aircraft statewide with four full-time pilots in 2016. Extra-help pilots were used to supplement during periods of high fire danger. All AFC pilots hold at least a commercial pilot's certificate with instrument privileges obtained through the Federal Aviation Administration.



Aero Commander Twin-Engine Plane

Six of the aircraft are state owned and nine are federally owned. Two Aero Commander twin-engine planes are utilized in an air attack role, coordinating air tanker suppression aircraft. The 13 single-engine aircraft are used for fire detection, timber damage surveys and other forestry related needs.

All AFC aircraft are maintained to FAA standards. Upgrades to avionics are completed as technology advances. Logbooks, maintenance records, general condition, and appearance of all aircraft are thoroughly and routinely examined to maintain a high standard of safety. During 2016, the aviation crew recorded 1,209 flight hours while detecting wildfires, timber damage, and other forestry-related purposes.

During 2016, the Aviation Department completed the installation of Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B) equipment in AFC aircraft. The Federal Aviation Administration has mandated that all aircraft operating in controlled airspace have ADS-B installed by 2020. ADS-B is part of the next generation air traffic control system in the United States. The current “radar based” system is being phased out to the satellite based ADS-B.

The aviation department began the bidding process for digital radios for each aircraft. These radios will replace the analog radios that are currently in use. The radios should be installed and ready for use by the summer of 2017.

Aviation staff also travelled around the state to conduct 14 AFC Walk Tests.



AFC Personnel Provide a Tour of the Malvern Airport Plane Hangar

### Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas's Forests

### Rural Fire Protection

The AFC Rural Fire Protection (RFP) Program serves the needs of rural Arkansas fire departments, as well as the repair needs of AFC firefighting vehicles and tractors. Communities need prepared, well-equipped fire crews. RFP provides required Wildland Training Courses for volunteer fire departments (VFDs) and administers federal grant programs to assist VFDs with the acquisition of firefighting equipment.

Firefighting equipment and vehicles are provided through the Federal Excess Property Program. Vehicles destined for VFDs are evaluated and repaired for initial service at the RFP maintenance facility. Additionally, VFDs may apply to receive interest-free loans or Wildfire Volunteer Fire (WVVF) Grants.



Union Thida Hill VFD

### Rural Fire Protection Highlights: 2016

- Assisted 62 communities with Wildland Fire Suppression kits, totaling \$186,000 in the value of provided wildland fire equipment.
- Conducted 66 classes of the 8-hour Wildland Fire Suppression Training Class. There were 615 VFDs represented and 1,643 students received certification.
- Provided 72 firefighting vehicles to VFDs; total equipment value was \$7,903,497.60.
- Financed 15 interest-free loans to communities for firefighting equipment, totaling \$155,891.21 in loan dollars.
- Hosted the annual Firefighter Appreciation Fire Show, with participation as follows: 380 Firefighters were in attendance, representing 110 volunteer fire departments, alongside 42 individuals representing 18 fire services vendors.
- The AFC provides funding, support and personnel, and is heavily involved with the planning and hosting of the annual Arkansas Fire Boat School Training Event. Coordinated by the Arkansas Fire Boat School Committee, the 2016 event included 45 fire boats from 34 fire departments and over 250 firefighters, emergency responders, instructors, and volunteers.



Imboden VFD



Choctaw VFD





**Arkansas Firewise**

Arkansas Firewise works with individuals, communities and fire departments to provide training, events, and an array of wildfire prevention, safety and mitigation resources. Through fire department training and education, the Arkansas Firewise team helps communities become safer from wildfires through mitigation projects, preparedness and planning, and general awareness.



The Arkansas Firewise Program had 166 Firewise-recognized communities in 2016. Arkansas has 10% of the total Firewise communities in the nation, and more than any other participating state program. Overall, 292 communities have worked to become Firewise and many more have received program presentations and/or resources and assistance. Firewise personnel provided Risk Assessment Training to 32 fire departments in 2016, which is hands-on training for assessing wildfire risk on a house-by-house basis in rural fire districts. Arkansas Firewise partners with the Arkansas Fire Training Academy to provide accreditation for Risk Assessment Training, which counts toward the 16-hour annual training requirement for statewide firefighters. This program has overseen 282 Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans, which remain updated and on file in the Little Rock office.



Hoxie VFD



Bald Knob VFD



Firewise Five-Year Awards



Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas’s Forests

**Law Enforcement**



Clinton Shop-with-a-Cop Event

| Case Type          | Total Completed |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Fire Cases         | 103             |
| Timber Theft       | 82              |
| Dumping Cases      | 49              |
| Vandalism          | 7               |
| AFC Internal       | 1               |
| <b>Total Cases</b> | <b>242</b>      |

The AFC has three statewide investigators and 12 district Law Enforcement Officers (LEOs). The district LEOs are rangers and foresters that also have law enforcement responsibilities as additional duties. The AFC has the authority to enforce all state laws, but focuses primarily on unlawful dumping, timber theft, forest fires, and logging equipment theft/vandalism. LEOs aggressively seek prosecution of violators to deter such crimes. Rangers with law enforcement responsibility are required to take 16 hours of law enforcement training each year; district LEOs and investigators are asked to attend 40 hours of training. All LEOs attended firearms training.

During 2016, LEOs conducted arrests on felony and misdemeanor cases and recovered \$201,170.46 in restitution to landowners. Efforts of LEOs, through citations and suppression costs, resulted in the collection of \$2,863.29 in fines and \$17,970.48 in suppression costs. In all, \$222,004.23 was recovered. LEOs also patrolled state forest land (at Poison Springs State Forest) during modern gun (deer) season.

Officers assisted in several search and rescue efforts, emergency response incidents, and assisted other agencies throughout the state, when requested. Notable partnerships and incidents include:

- Law Enforcement Seminar at Rural Life Conference at UAPB
- Sent one investigator through the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy
- Provided AFC Law Enforcement presentation to partners/classes
- Law Enforcement team attended 40 hour training at the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy
- Conducted the FI-110 Wildland Fire Observation and Origin Scene Protection Class to rangers across the state
- AFC LEOs are members of the Southeast Arson Task Force (which combines LEO’s from all Southeast compact states); LEOs attended 40 hours of training in Georgia for the annual Task Force training
- Involved in numerous community events, including fishing derbies and Shop-with-a-Cop events



Retirement Luncheon for LEO John Murphy



# Forest Resource Management

AFC forest management division implements innovative forest management programs and practices to establish, conserve, and utilize forests and related natural resources that will enhance social, environmental, and economic benefits.



Tree Farmer of the Year,  
Earl T. Smith of Izard County



Southern Group of State Foresters Water  
Committee Visits Arkansas



Izard County Tree Farm Tour

## Forest Stewardship Program

The AFC works with a diverse group of partners and professionals to conserve, protect, and enhance Arkansas's forests through the Forest Stewardship Program. The program provides an opportunity for non-industrial, private forest landowners to manage their property for multiple-uses, utilizing professional forestry guidance objectives including: wildlife, recreation, soil and water conservation, agro-forestry, and/or timber production. The primary delivery mechanism is a comprehensive Forest Stewardship Management Plan prepared by AFC foresters, consulting foresters, AGFC private lands biologists, as well as soil and water professionals.



Landowner Receives Stewardship  
Certificate in Perry County

As of 2016, Arkansas had 4,917 landowners who own 901,819 acres enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program. There are 1,258 Certified Forest Stewards with 281,872 acres, maintained under the Forest Stewardship Program guidelines. In 2016, 160 Stewardship Plans were written or revised, encompassing 26,584 acres. Consulting foresters wrote 62% of the plans, accounting for 75% of the acreage.

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Landowners certified as Forest Stewards:       | 36 landowners, 6,619 acres   |
| Re-certification of Forest Steward properties: | 81 properties, 17,254 acres  |
| Landowner Assists:                             | 469 landowners, 57,859 acres |

## Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas's Forests

### Urban and Community Forestry

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Number of people living in communities provided educational, technical, and/or financial assistance:                                      | 1,283,854 |
| Percent of population living in communities managing programs to plant, protect and maintain their urban and community trees and forests: | 38%       |
| Volunteer hours accumulated through tree planting projects, tree board participation, organizing workshops, and training program hours:   | 19,016    |

The Urban and Community Forestry Program assists communities, government agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, arborists and landowners by providing them with training and education regarding the management of community forests and individual trees.

#### Urban Forestry Assistance

Assistance is provided through district arborists and urban forestry representatives in the eight districts, as well as AFC's non-profit partner, the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council, which has members across the state. Together, AFC and AUFC held workshops in 2016 with topics including soil health, tree pruning, tree board/Tree City, tree selection and care, Landwise Conservation, and International Society of Arboriculture Arborist's Certification Workshop. More than 200 professionals attended the workshops, including parks and public works directors, city planners, engineers, urban and county foresters, and landscape architects.



Pottsville STOP Program

#### Shade Trees on Playgrounds Program

Many school playgrounds around the state are in sunny locations with little-to-no shade. Shade Trees on Playgrounds (STOP), an Arkansas program established fourteen years ago, addresses the problem of skin cancer development in children.

Over 3,000 students at seven schools participated in STOP programs in 2016. During the month of October, tree planting ceremonies were held at schools in the following towns: Monticello, Dierks, Ward, Jonesboro, Pottsville, Morrilton and Pocahontas. Participating students and teachers learned how shade can help prevent skin cancer, and how forests provide clean air and water, wood for homes, wildlife habitat, buffering for wind and noise, and places to enjoy the outdoors. AFC provides five hardwood shade trees such as oak, blackgum, tulip poplar and maple for the children to plant at the end of the ceremony. Forty-seven shade trees were planted at participating schools.



Monticello Tree Campus,USA Event



### Arkansas Community Tree Recovery Campaign

The Arkansas Community Tree Recovery Campaign in partnership between the Arbor Day Foundation, the Arkansas Forestry Commission and the Arkansas Urban Forestry Council, was implemented for the second year in a row. The purpose of the campaign is to replace urban tree canopy loss to natural disasters in Arkansas communities. The campaign was started in 2015 and continued in 2016 for the communities of Vilonia, Mayflower and Ferndale. During that time, 6,200 potted trees and seedlings were provided to Arkansas residents free of charge to replace trees damaged and destroyed by the April, 2013 tornadoes. Tree species for the program included redbud, white oak, pecan, bald cypress, loblolly pine, cherrybark oak, and willow oak. A kick-off ceremony for the program was held at the Vilonia City Park.

### Tree Assessments

AFC staff implemented an inventory of the trees on the Governor's Mansion grounds, as well as several tree assessments for communities that included local parks, downtown streets, and areas designated for future construction. Along with assessments, planting and conservation, and maintenance plans were developed. Personnel also worked with several colleges to develop Tree Campus, USA programs.



Tree Inventory at the Governor's Mansion

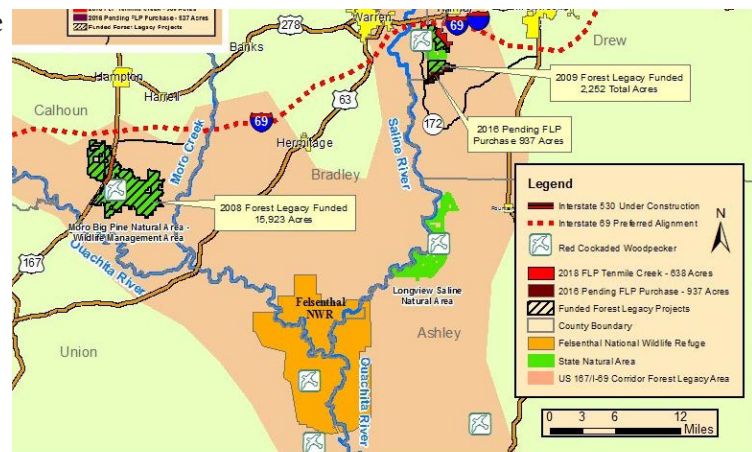
### Urban Forestry Grants

Nine grants were awarded to communities and non-profits. Grant projects funded tree plantings in parks and along streets, median improvements for trees, rain gardens and bioswale development, hazard tree removal and pruning, development of indoor classroom and outdoor arboretum, workshops and meetings for Tree City, USA certification, and signage for stream restoration projects.

### Forest Legacy

The Forest Stewardship Committee met September 28, 2016 and approved two Forest Legacy projects. The projects approved were as follows: 1) Tenmile Creek tract of the Pine Flatwoods Recovery Initiative (PFRI) project in Drew County, and 2) Indian Mountain East and West tracts of the Hot Springs Recharge (HSR) project in Garland County. The projects were submitted to the Forest Legacy National Panel on November 17, 2016 for consideration in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 budget cycle. If the PFRI project is funded, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission will purchase the 638 acre tract fee simple for \$1,275,000. If the HSR project is funded, the AFC will purchase two tracts, totaling 681 acres, fee simple for \$1,825,000.

Pine Flatwoods Recovery Initiative – Tenmile Creek tract detailed project map (right)

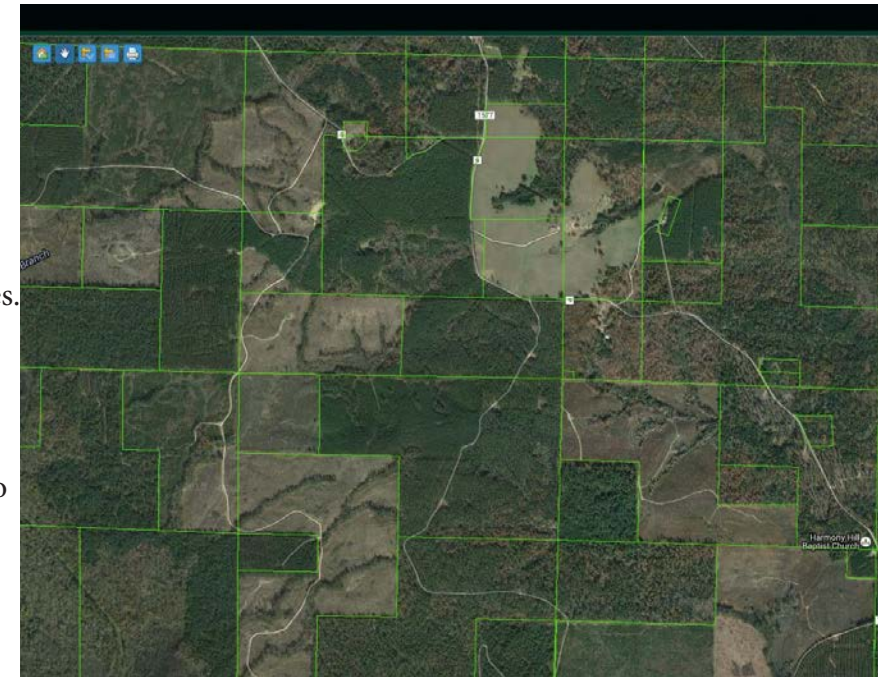


The Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission and AFC partnered to complete the appraisal and closing documents necessary for the fee simple purchase of the 937 acre Hazel Creek tract of the PFRI project from Potlatch for \$1,350,000. 75% of the Hazel Creek tract total cost will be reimbursed with a FY 2016 Forest Legacy Grant. AFC will be the pass-through agency for the grant.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

#### Fire and Activities Reporting Website (FAR)

The Fire and Activities Reporting (FAR) website serves to record forest management activities, wildfire activities, and map creation. Since FAR was deployed, AFC users suggested 31 changes. A software developer completed 11 changes to the FAR during the first six months of 2016. The AFC GIS Forester utilized a pre-negotiated state service contract to engage a software developer to program the remaining 20 software changes. The 20 software changes will include enhanced soil type mapping, prescribed fire area of concern buffering, automated prescribed fire smoke fan rendering, enhanced password security measures, a district level activity report, automated tract boundary drawing and searching by owner name from existing county assessor ownership layers, advanced legend symbol labeling, and data exporting that is directly compatible with the US Forest Service's Stewardship Program reporting website. The developer should complete the 20 software changes early in 2017.



Map Layer in FARs Website Tool

#### Computer Distribution

The AFC IT Coordinator and AFC GIS Forester configured/distributed the remaining 30 laptop computers of the 88 new laptop computers and one new desktop computer purchased. These new computers replaced old computers used by AFC foresters and county rangers. The AFC IT Coordinator upgraded each new computer's operating system from Windows 7 to Windows 10. The Windows 10 operating system upgrade is a free offer from Microsoft until June, 2016 for Windows 7 users. State government will pay \$199.99 per Windows 10 license starting in July, 2016. Therefore, AFC realized a savings of \$17,799.11 by completing the Windows 10 upgrade prior to the June, 2016 deadline.

#### Garmin Units Training

The AFC GIS Forester deployed 120 Garmin GPSMAP 64s units at two strategically located training sessions. Two representatives from each district attended the training and received the units for their district during the training session. Representatives from District 1, 2, 4, and 5 attended the training in Malvern. Representatives from District 3, 6, 7, and 8 attended the training in Greenbrier. The representatives who attended training in turn trained the personnel in their district on how to use the GPSMAP 64s. AFC personnel will use the GPSMAP 64s, which includes color 24K Topographic base maps, for navigation to fires, tree planting inspections, boundary delineation, and other duties.



## Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas's Forests



Pine Seedling Lifting at Baicum Nursery

### Baucum Nursery

The purpose of the AFC Nursery is to produce, store and distribute pine and hardwood seedlings of the highest quality. Seedlings are coupled with genetic background that provides them with the greatest chance of survival and the highest possible growth potential. These seedlings are sold primarily to private, non-industrial landowners for afforestation and reforestation purposes.

Baucum Nursery produced 4,837,700 hardwood seedlings and 2,422,000 pine seedlings for Arkansas landowners in 2016. Baicum Nursery sold and distributed 4,300,650 hardwood seedlings and 2,159,900 pine seedlings to Arkansas landowners. Private landowners purchased most of the seedlings. The majority of pine and hardwood seedlings were planted under federal conservation programs which include: EQIP, CRP, WRP (refer to pages 21-22), and the Southern Pine Beetle Prevention and Restoration Program.

Nursery employees completed all necessary cultural practices to ensure top-quality seedlings. Fertilizers were applied per soil test results. Soil fumigation was done and pesticides were applied to prevent and control weeds, diseases, and insects. More than 100 tons of soil amendments, as well as cover crops on layout fields, were used to maintain soil productivity.

Promotional efforts for seedling sales will be continued by all district and county personnel. In 2016, two 53 ft. refrigerated tractor trailers were painted with AFC logo and agency messages as rolling billboards. These trailers were used to service large customers, which helped reduce the strain of processing large orders through remote cooler locations. There are 13 remote cooler locations in addition to Baicum Nursery, where landowners can pick up seedlings. New coolers have been built in 5 of the 13 remote locations. These coolers are critical to the distribution of seedlings, especially for landowners with small land tracts.



Seedling Presentation to NRCS partners



New Baicum Nursery Reefer



Baucum Nursery Seedling Giveaways for Community Tree Recovery Campaign

### Tree Improvement

The AFC continues to be aggressive and innovative in meeting the reforestation needs of Arkansas's private non-industrial landowners by providing seed of the highest genetic gain and quality. The AFC's breeding and testing program and orchard management practices continually improve the genetic gain offered by our programs.

Production orchards are managed for maximum seed production with low cost. All cultural practices are completed according to specifications provided by the Western Gulf Forest Tree Improvement Program (WGFTIP). Establishment, maintenance and measurements continue on all the pine and hardwood progeny tests.

The AFC, in association with WGFTIP, continues to improve the genetic quality of plant material available for reforestation in the Western Gulf region. The AFC sells pine seedlings produced from seed with the highest possible genetic gain. Only the best clones in AFC's loblolly and shortleaf pine seed orchards are being harvested. The balance of cones and seed are then sold.



Tree Improvement Research Area, Bluff City

### Cone and Seed Collection

The AFC harvested 292.75 bushels of improved loblolly pine cones. AFC accepted bids for the sale of pine cones that were not needed by AFC: 100 bushels were sold for \$12,100. Shortleaf pine orchards produced 75.25 bushels of cones. The AFC collected 5300 pounds of sawtooth oak seed, 746 pounds of improved cherrybark oak, and 268 pounds of improved nuttall oak seed.



## Forest Health

The Forest Health Specialist assists AFC personnel statewide in efforts to maintain healthy, productive forest ecosystems by preventing, detecting, monitoring, and suppressing damaging insects and diseases. AFC offers technical assistance to landowners who encounter forest health issues.

### Fall Webworm and other Defoliators

Fall webworm was exceedingly abundant for the second straight year. The pest was common in the north and northwest regions of the state. In many places, overwhelming abundance caused complete crown defoliation of persimmon, pecan, walnut, hickories, sweetgum, and some oak species. Newspaper articles, television news reports, and magazine articles were prepared to address the growing public concern. Specialists reassured Arkansans that the defoliation was unlikely to cause our trees harm because the leaves are lost so late in the growing season.

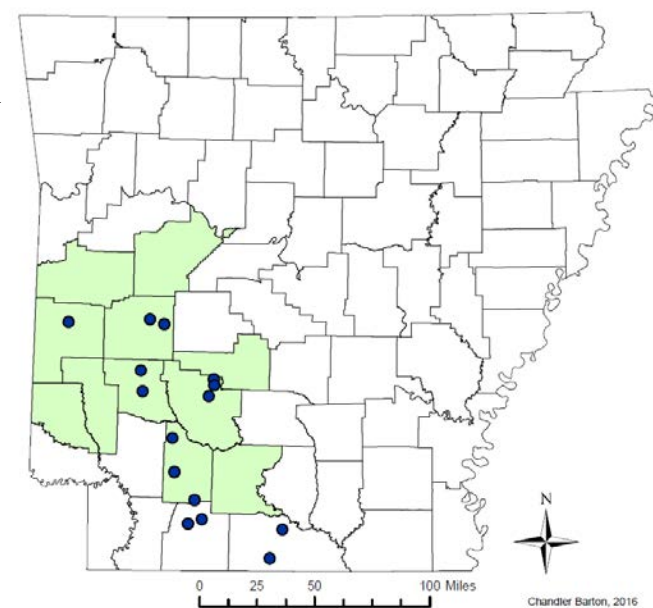
Likely attributed to mild temperatures and regular rainfall, several types of defoliators reached outbreak-level abundance. Isolated damages caused by May beetles and loblolly pine sawfly were reported during the spring months. Walkingsticks and red-headed pine sawfly caused defoliation during late-summer months. These outbreaks caused small acreage disturbances, most of which were unnoticed by the general public. The AFC continued to participate in the south-wide southern pine beetle pheromone trap survey. Trapping results, which predicted a low or stable population, proved to be accurate. No SPB were captured in 2016, and no infestation was reported.

### Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program

The Southern Pine Beetle Prevention Program continues to provide incentives for landowners wanting to thin overstocked pine stands. In 2016, 48 projects on 2,153 acres were completed and paid a total of \$164,021.76 in cost-share incentives.

### Aerial Survey Used to Monitor Forest Health Disturbances

AFC's aerial survey methods are being modernized to hasten the detection of outbreaks, which will lead to faster alerts to private and public landowners. In 2016, Arkansas began using a tablet-based aerial survey tool for mapping forest disturbances known as Digital Mobile Sketch-Mapper (DMSM). This tool was used in 11 counties where certain pests were suspected. In 2016, no disturbances caused by southern pine beetle were detected; however, the tool helped the forest health specialist map other forest disturbances like emerald ash borer and Ips beetles.



SBP Trap Map

### Ips Beetles – An Increasingly Important Pest of the Southeast

Pine engraver beetles, or Ips bark beetles, caused economic damages to loblolly pine plantations in Sevier, Howard, and Polk counties between late-2015 and early-2016. During that wide-scale outbreak, approximately 21,000 acres were affected. Later in 2016, 47 Ips outbreaks were mapped with the new aerial survey tool. Unlike the previous year, most of these outbreaks remained small, i.e., no more than an acre in size. Ips abundance increases when pine trees become susceptible to attack during droughts. Droughts are a reoccurring event in Arkansas, and therefore, the threat of Ips outbreaks will always be present. Thinning is the best prevention method against Ips beetles.



Ips Beetles

### Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

The infestation of emerald ash borer in southern Arkansas began to show observable widespread mortality in 2016. Mortality was evident along the Ouachita River where ash densities are greater. Four new counties were confirmed, bringing the total to 14 known counties. One new confirmed county was Randolph, which borders the Missouri state line. This confirmation indicates that the previously known infestation in southeastern Missouri has now spread into Arkansas.



Ips Beetle Damage

As a result of the new county confirmations, the quarantined region was expanded by the Arkansas State Plant Board (ASPB) and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service – Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ). Arkansas decided that the quarantine boundary should be ahead of the confirmed counties, thus “buffer counties” were included in the quarantine region. The choice to include buffer counties was made based on evidence in other states that the beetle is present years before an initial detection.

EAB detection and monitoring is a collaborative effort in Arkansas. The ASPB and APHIS-PPQAFC investigates reported sightings across the state and uses traps and visual surveys within the quarantined region. University of Arkansas Extension Service also investigates trees reported by landowners, and they provide outreach efforts for the state. Monitoring and research is conducted by the University of Arkansas Monticello, and their efforts will reveal more information about EAB dispersal and biology in southern states.

AFC continued introductions of EAB biocontrol wasps in 2016. These tiny wasps (no larger than a pencil tip) are from the native origin of EAB in Asia. So far, two wasp species have been introduced, *Tetrastichus planipennisi* and *Oobius agrili*. Biocontrol efforts offer a counter defense against EAB. Wasps are expected to limit EAB population growth in the release sites.

### Redbay Ambrosia Beetle and Laurel Wilt Disease

The invasive redbay ambrosia beetle and the disease that it transmits, laurel wilt, are now confirmed in four Arkansas counties. The disease threatens to remove Arkansas's sassafras trees. Known for its unique scent when crushing the leaves, sassafras is an ecologically important native tree species. The dispersal rate of the beetle in sassafras is unknown, but we should expect the beetle and disease to spread across Arkansas in the near future. Slowing the spread is possible by preventing the movement of sassafras cut for firewood or other needs. Control may be impossible but the infested trees should be destroyed by chipping or burning.





Annual Forest Survey Data

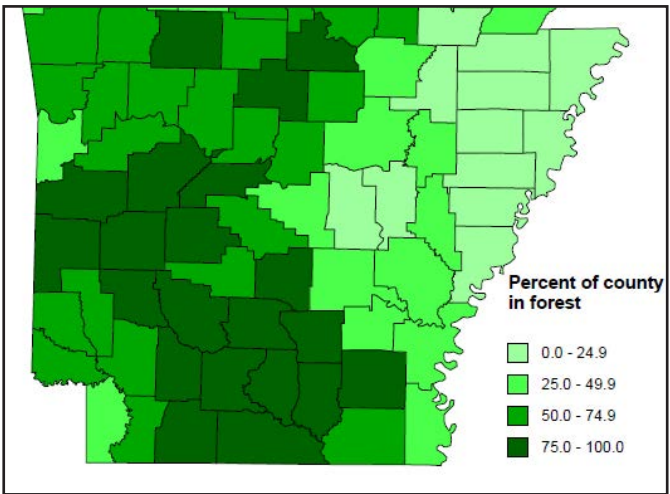
The Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program has been collecting forest resource data in Arkansas since the 1930s. FIA data is obtained from permanent inventory plots located primarily on a 3x3 mile grid across the state. There are about 5,700 FIA sample plots in Arkansas, each is re-inventoried every five years. FIA foresters collect measurements on 20% of the plots each year, which provide annual updates about forest growth, damage, mortality, health, biomass, ownership trends, timber availability, and land use trends.

Prior to 1999, the U.S. Forest Service conducted all the Forest Inventory surveys in the state. Beginning in 1999, the AFC entered into a cooperative agreement with the Southern Research Station (SRS) where the AFC would conduct the field measurements and the Forest Service would continue producing statistical reports from the data. The latest inventory data can be found at the National Forest Inventory Program Data and Tools website (<http://www.fia.fs.fed.us/tools-data/>).

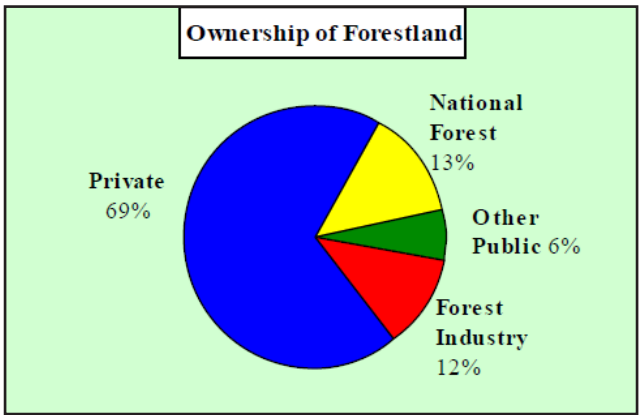
The Arkansas Forestry Commission’s FIA program consists of one Forest Inventory Coordinator and six Forest Inventory Specialists. These foresters work full time collecting research data and must maintain a minimum Quality Control/Quality Assurance grading average of 87%.

During the 2016 calendar year, the AFC’s Forest Inventory program collected data from 582 research plots. The QC/QA grading average for the year was 97.8%. The 2015 annual survey has been posted on the National FIA Data and Tools website. The 2015 data tables are available on the SRS website at (<http://srsfia2.fs.fed.us/states/arkansas.shtml>).

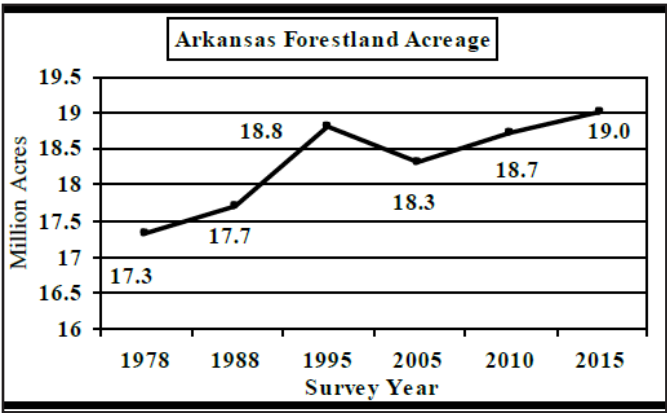
Arkansas forest data collected by FIA crews was a major factor to influence the decision for placement of the \$1.3 billion Sun Paper pulp mill near Arkadelphia, which was announced in 2016.



Forest Distribution

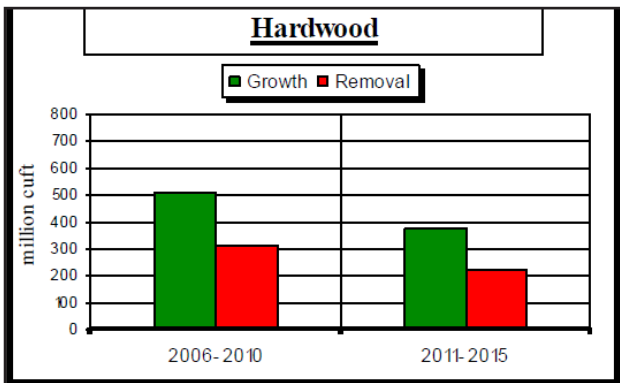


Forest Ownership

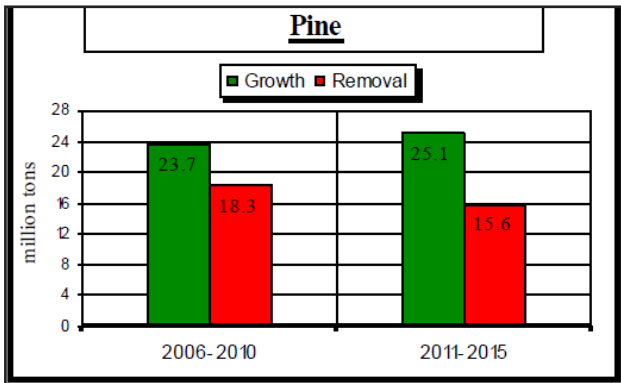


Forest Acreage

Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas’s Forests



Hardwood Growth and Removal Chart



Pine Growth and Removal Chart

A part of Forest Resource Management includes the coordination of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Programs including the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Conservation Reserve Program, described below.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (\*NRCS)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat, primarily on private land. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides cost-share assistance to conservation-minded landowners who are unable to meet the specific eligibility requirements of other USDA conservation programs.

In 2016, the Commission provided 5 Management Plans on 180 acres to private, non-industrial forest landowners. A total of 5 landowners with 185 acres were given technical advice and 5 prescribed burns on 287 acres were conducted.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (\*NRCS)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides a voluntary conservation program to farmers and ranchers. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants with implementation of structural/management practices on eligible agricultural land. A portion of the state allocated EQIP funds may be dedicated to forestry practices. EQIP addresses Forest Protection, Health, and Water Quality. Forest practices include firebreaks, prescribed burning, fencing, forest stand improvement, invasive species control, tree planting, water bars, stream crossing structures, culverts, and seeding/stream bank stabilization. EQIP offers contracts to provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices. EQIP activities are carried out according to a plan that identifies appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concerns.

In 2016, 296 landowners with 29,500 acres were given technical advice, 4 landowners with 194 acres were referred to forest consultants and other resource professionals. The AFC prepared or revised 188 management plans on 13,723 acres for non-industrial private forest landowners to implement EQIP-eligible practices. Planting inspections were done on 81 landowner properties, comprising 3,057 acres. Seedling survival checks were conducted on 57 landowner properties. Prescribed burns were performed on 48 tracts, which totaled 1,982 acres. Fifty two fire breaks were installed or maintained.



## Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas's Forests

### Conservation Reserve Program (\*NRCS/FSA)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) began in March, 1986, and was designed to retire erodible cropland from agricultural production - in an effort to conserve soil. Landowners may submit applications for eligible crop or pastureland. Programs include vegetative cover for established trees, riparian buffers, wetland restoration, and bottomland timber establishment on wetlands.

The AFC is a primary Technical Service Provider (TSP) for landowners that are accepted into the CRP program. TSP responsibilities include development of the Conservation Plan to direct implementation, and verification of the implementation through audit and compliance checks.

In 2016, the AFC wrote Conservation Plans for 307 landowners, which resulted in forest management recommendations for CRP on 13,543 acres, and the planting of 10 acres of pine seedlings and 1,665 acres of hardwood seedlings.

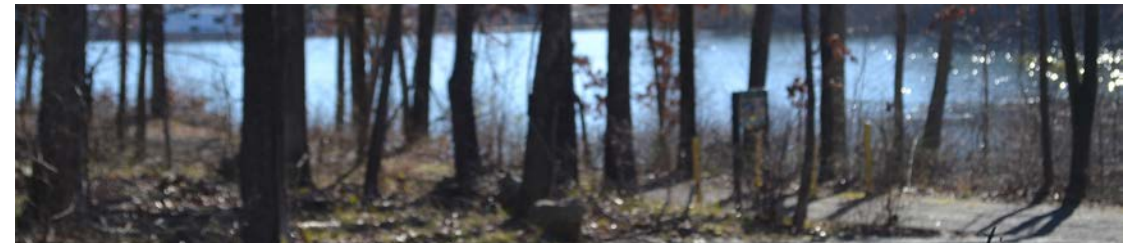
### Water Quality Management Program

AFC is the designated management agency for the silvicultural section of the Arkansas Water Plan. Additionally, the Southern Group of State Foresters recommend that the following six items be included in state forestry water quality programs: 1) Best Management Practices (BMP) training and education for landowners, loggers, and foresters; 2) Courtesy Exams on active logging sites; 3) Monitoring of BMP implementation on silvicultural sites throughout the state; 4) Resolution of timber harvesting/water quality complaints; 5) Coordination with other state and federal agencies, and; 6) Participation in water quality grants. What follows are details of AFC's activity in each of the 6 areas.

#### BMP Training

The AFC BMP Coordinator regularly conducts training for foresters, loggers and landowners. Training in 2016 consisted of the following:

- Technical training for 73 foresters and loggers specific to skidder stream crossings and streamside management zones
- BMP training for 26 new AFC County Foresters and Rangers
- Partnering with the Arkansas Timber Producers Association to provide 6 training sessions for 255 loggers, foresters, and timber buyers
- Partnering with the Beaver Watershed Alliance to conduct a landowner workshop in northwest Arkansas. The workshop offered a tour of two stream restoration sites and a riparian buffer demonstration project. An accompanying indoor session addressed the Anatomy of Successful Watershed Protection, Forest Retention and Forest BMPs. The workshop had sixty participants.
- Two presentations at the two-day 2016 Non-point Source Pollution Stakeholder Conference; Presentations summarized the AFC BMP Program and Environmental Protection Agency grant project.
- Presenting to the Southeast Arkansas Area of Conservation Districts



Maumelle Watershed

#### Courtesy Exams

Courtesy exams provide an opportunity for water quality staff to meet with foresters and loggers in the field to discuss BMP implementation. Manuals, brochures, and fact sheets are provided to participants. Fourteen exams with 50 participants in eleven counties were hosted in 2016.

#### BMP Monitoring

The periodic survey of BMP implementation began with site selection. Sites were selected through satellite imagery. Selections will be further refined by ground truthing followed by monitoring in 2017.



BMP Coordinator presents Arkansas BMPs to Partners

#### Complaint Resolution

The AFC processes logging complaints and makes a determination concerning whether water quality impairment, or the potential of impairment, has taken place. In 2016 there were 14 complaints filed, three of which were valid. All three valid complaints were resolved by implementing BMPs.

#### Coordination with other State and Federal agencies

Partnership with state and federal agencies is imperative to the implementation of water quality programs. Examples of partnership efforts of the Arkansas BMP program include:

- Participated on an Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality task group to assess the methodology of determining which waters are not meeting designated water quality standards as listed in the Arkansas Water Quality Standards.
- Participated in the Unpaved Roads training sessions led by The Nature Conservancy. The sessions were for county judges, road supervisors, and other agencies with unpaved road maintenance responsibilities. There were six training courses scattered around the state with over 200 participants.
- Hosted the 2016 Southern Group of State Foresters Water Resource Committee winter meeting held in Little Rock, March 1-3. The winter meetings provide an important forum for the thirteen southern states to collaborate with the Environmental Protection Agency, United States Forest Service (USFS), and other cooperators on water quality protection efforts in forested watersheds and landscapes.

#### Participation in Water Quality Grants

AFC is partnering with a diverse group of landowners, state and federal agencies and non-profits to further the understanding of the role that working forests play in clean drinking water. The AFC was awarded a \$146,930.00 USFS grant which will fund a project lead over the next two years. The project lead will contract with the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities which will be a sub-recipient of the AFC grant.



## Poison Springs State Forest

**Poison Springs State Forest (PSSF) demonstrates science-based forest management that protects and conserves water, wildlife, soil, and related forest resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.**

PSSF is a demonstration forest located in western Ouachita and eastern Nevada counties. PSSF provides the AFC with yearly revenue while demonstrating different forest management techniques to private non-industrial landowners. When the AFC purchased PSSF in 1957, the 19,942-acre forest had 20,240,000 board feet of pine sawtimber and 10,303,000 board feet of hardwood sawtimber. The AFC has cut timber every year since 1957. Today PSSF is 23,172 acres and has over 120,000,000 board feet of pine sawtimber and over 15,000,000 board feet of hardwood sawtimber. PSSF has added some land each year for the last several years. The most recent acquisitions came from timber industry and non-industrial private forest landowners.

The AFC used timber sale proceeds to make annual payments to the U.S. Forest Service until the original land purchase was paid for. The recent land purchases were paid for primarily through grants from the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council. Timber sale proceeds pay operations and salary expenses and provide the AFC revenue for general operations. The AFC does not use general revenue to operate PSSF, and places timber sale proceeds into a trust fund used mostly for capital equipment purchases.

In 2016, PSSF began the process to be third-party certified by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

### Income from Poison Springs State Forest, 2016

| Product            | Volume           | Value               |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Pine Sawtimber     | 20,524.79 (Tons) | \$672,638.73        |
| Hardwood Sawtimber | 945 (Tons)       | \$36,138.32         |
| Pine Pulpwood      | 1,658.63 (Tons)  | \$9,553.79          |
| Hardwood Pulpwood  | 1,021.63 (Tons)  | \$8,434.79          |
| Misc. and Salvage  | 1036.25 (Tons)   | \$4,145             |
| <b>Total:</b>      |                  | <b>\$730,910.63</b> |



Timber Harvest at Poison Springs State Forest



Natural Areas at Poison Springs State Forest





## Administration

**AFC administration provides support and leadership to agency personnel with operational efficiency and effectiveness by fostering partnerships, exercising fiscal management, and cultivating a workforce that consistently responds to the challenges facing Arkansas's forests, forest owners, and citizens.**

The Human Resources (HR) Department is responsible for employment procedures, recruitment, employee benefits, time data entry, payroll processing, workers compensation claims, training, and safety. The HR staff works with AFC employees on a myriad of day-to-day assists to facilitate a productive work environment. The Arkansas General Assembly authorized 292 regular positions for 2016, but the AFC averaged filling these with a total of 270 employees. A total of 31 agency training courses were provided – representing 8,229 total man hours taken by employees and cooperators.

### Safety

Safety is a topic of every staff meeting agenda, in addition to routine tailgate sessions and local AFC unit safety meetings. Inspection of PPE (personal protective equipment) worn by AFC firefighters is reviewed in conjunction with annual equipment inspections. AFC firefighters must meet annual physical fitness standards.

### Employee Development

HR handles training requests and is responsible for maintaining copies of individual training records. Other departments also provide and report training that occurs within respective departments. Training conducted in 2016 was accomplished with several different methods, ranging from the traditional classroom settings, to field demonstrations, as well as hands-on/practical, and distance/on-line self-study training.

AFC staff continued to comply with training directives from the Department of Homeland Security, which applies to employees with emergency response responsibilities. Much of the training is available by distance-learning from the FEMA Emergency Management Institute. 94 AFC employees completed such training during 2016.

Additionally, personnel are required to take specific training provided by the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration Inter-Agency Training Program (IATP). A total of 42 employees participated in 4 different IATP courses in 2016, including: Discipline and Grievance Handling, Interpersonal Communications, HRkansas for Supervisors, and Hiring Talent. A total of 154 employees were certified in CPR/First Aid training to maintain their biannual certification requirements in 2016. A group of 11 AFC staff members are certified instructors in CPR/First Aid to provide training to other AFC personnel.

In 2016, 13 AFC employees and 28 others from state, federal and private organizations attended the Prescribed Fire Course held annually at Camp Robinson. AFC personnel help organize and instruct the annual Prescribed Fire Course. Agencies require their personnel to pass this course before they can manage a prescribed burn.



Tabletop Exercise at River Valley Fire Academy



Prescribed Fire as a Management Tool Workshop

The 12th Annual River Valley Fire Academy was held on the campus of Arkansas Tech University in May, 2016. During this academy, 200 individuals registered for classes, and most attended either one or more courses that were offered. The River Valley Fire Academy remains the main training method by which AFC employees and partners/cooperators receive required wildland fire training that meets both agency standards and the standards of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. This event also continues to be a very cost effective means for agencies to arrange for employee training, locally. A total of 11 different agencies and organizations were represented at the academy with attendees from several surrounding states. A total of 49 AFC employees participated as students and 10 AFC employees as classroom instructors for 5 different classes.

AD Training – U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and National Interagency Fire and Disaster Responses

AFC employees and other cooperators receive specialized training for emergency response positions within the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) or other federal agencies. AFC employees attend training as Administratively Determined (AD) employees of the Federal Government. The Federal Government pays for travel and training expenses. Upon meeting the training requirements, AFC employees are then selected by the USFS or other federal agencies to fill emergency response positions.

In 2016, the AFC issued Fire Qualification Cards to 39 AFC employees, 6 retired AFC employees, 7 to individuals from paid or volunteer fire departments, and 20 to individuals from Arkansas State Parks. All of these individuals met the training, experience, and physical fitness requirements for national certification amid many different emergency response positions. Many AFC employees continue to maintain job qualifications that allow them to be utilized as resources for national emergencies.

In 2016, the AFC deployed 18 AFC and 6 non-AFC individuals to VA, FL, OR, CA, WA, ID, MT, OK, NC, TN, and TX wildfires. These individuals worked as: Faller Class C, Firefighter Type 2, Air Tanker Base Manager, Emergency Medical Paramedic, Ramp Manager, Crew Boss, Staging Area Manager, Medical Unit Leader, Squad Boss, Emergency Medical Tech Basic, Faller Class B, Public Information Officer and Line Safety Officer. Arkansas also sent out the Arkansas Razorbacks 1 Crew, which is a 20-person wildfire hand crew that included 8 AFC employees.





# Minority Outreach

The Outreach Coordinator along with many dedicated AFC staff around the state continues to conduct outreach efforts to limited resource and historically underserved landowners with a goal of enhancing awareness of AFC programs and services and increasing participation among these groups of citizens. As a result, some 624 minority landowners (females, the disabled, citizens of an African-American, Latino, Asian-American and Native American decent) on 30,837 acres in 2016 have benefited from these initiatives. More of these efforts are highlighted in this report.

We are proud to report that the AFC is one of the partnering agencies with the University of Arkansas Pine Bluff (UAPB) in an effort to clear up heir property barriers for forestland owners. UAPB submitted a grant and was awarded funding through the US Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Sustainable Forestry African American Land Retention Program. Under this program, Arkansas has a 3-year project called “Keeping it in the Family” and will offer this assistance to landowners in Columbia, Hempstead, Howard, Little River, Ouachita, Nevada and Union Counties. AFC staff has worked with the project staff and other partners to provide groundwork crucial to the project’s success, as well as forestry education, outreach assistance, technical service, management plans, one-on-one site visits, etc. We have been involved from the beginning of this grant cycle and will continue to assist with project efforts through its completion. We are very excited to be a part of the Keeping it in the Family project, as this is the first time this type of assistance has been made available to Arkansas landowners. Workshops are being held in each of the counties listed above.

The AFC along with UAPB & Silas H. Hunt Community Development Corporation and other partnering agencies participated in the 3rd annual Conservation Day held at the 4-H Archery Range in Little River County. The AFC led a nature walk that included tree identification, woods safety, and wildlife habitat. Afterward, a prescribed burn demonstration was conducted along with discussions about forestry careers. The conservation day also provided educational information about forestry, Firewise, land surveying, GIS, soil health, archery activities, wildlife, career opportunities and included a special hands-on activity demonstrating the process of making paper by Domtar Paper Mill staff in Ashdown.

During 2016, the AFC’s Rural Fire Protection Program worked with minority volunteer fire departments across the state providing a Freightliner truck, a Freightliner Tanker Conversion and a Paint/Tank.

Arkansas Firewise program staff worked with the certified minority communities of Wilmot, Keller Bend, Dry Bayou, Montrose, Roy/Sweet Home, Tollette and Washington on renewals during 2016.



Little River County Conservation Day

As part of other minority outreach efforts to youth, Smokey Bear programs were offered to Forest Heights STEM Academy.

The AFC added many new staff members in 2016 to include one African American male and one African American female.

AFC Law Enforcement Officers assisted 111 minority landowners with timber theft complaints and investigation cases on a combined total of 7,684 acres.

Special events and conferences that included minority outreach or training are as follows: Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference, Rural Life Conference, Small Scale Producer Workshop, and landowner outreach meetings with the Arkansas Land and Community Development Corporation at Fargo-Lewisville. These meetings continue to be great networking opportunities. In many instances, landowners request AFC assistance. Landowners attending our forestry workshops are given the opportunity to sign up and receive emails about various forestry related updates. These updates were emailed four times in 2016.

In addition, the Outreach Coordinator attended the 10th Minority Landowner Conference, and the Sustainable Forestry African American Land Retention Meeting as a part of the Keeping it in the Family project team. The Outreach Coordinator assisted two local and four absentee landowners in 2016. She also reported on the AFC’s outreach activities to US Forest Service staff during the 2016 Cooperative Forestry Review.



Forrest Heights STEM Academy



Sustainable Forestry African American Land Retention Meeting





# Financial Report: For the Year ending June, 2016

Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas’s Forests

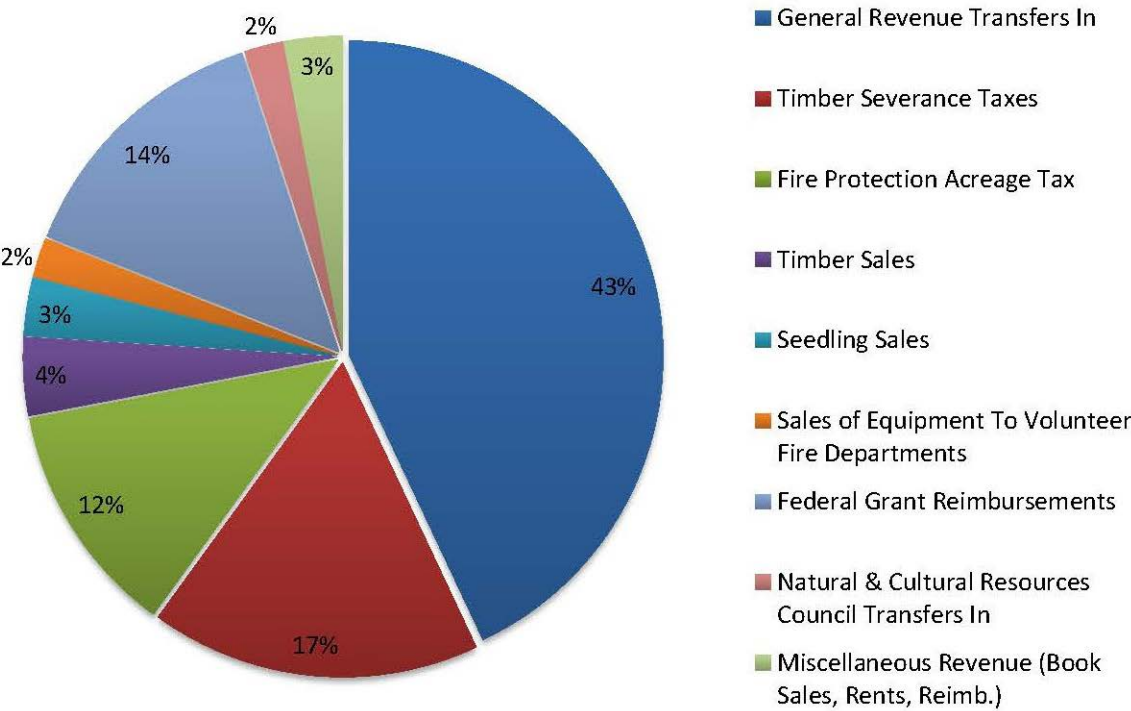
Cash Balance, July 1 \$8,293,477

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| RESOURCES PROVIDED                                |            |
| General Revenue Transfers In                      | 9,529,050  |
| Timber Severance Taxes                            | 3,770,084  |
| Fire Protection Acreage Tax                       | 2,761,003  |
| Timber Sales                                      | 830,804    |
| Seedling Sales                                    | 653,171    |
| Sales of Equipment To Volunteer Fire Departments  | 378,361    |
| Federal Grant Reimbursements                      | 3,166,372  |
| Natural & Cultural Resources Council Transfers In | 450,000    |
| Miscellaneous Revenue (Book Sales, Rents, Reimb.) | 727,208    |
| Total Receipts                                    | 22,266,053 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| EXPENDITURES                                      |            |
| Salary Expense                                    | 14,388,989 |
| Communication & Transportation of Commodities     | 339,683    |
| Printing & Advertising                            | 66,442     |
| Repairing & Servicing                             | 1,064,818  |
| Utilities & Rent                                  | 317,259    |
| Travel and Subsistence                            | 138,244    |
| Professional Services & Fees                      | 662,536    |
| Insurance and Bonds                               | 135,689    |
| Other Expenses & Services                         | 267,495    |
| Commodities, Materials & Supplies                 | 2,121,663  |
| Assistance, Grants & Aid                          | 487,589    |
| Refunds, Taxes & Claims                           | 34,992     |
| Treasurer of State Service Charges                | 191,887    |
| Capital Outlay                                    | 2,575,373  |
| Interagency Transfers for Claims & Other Expenses | (65,376)   |
| Total Expenditures                                | 22,727,283 |

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Cash Balance, June 30*           | \$7,832,247 |
| Non-Cash Expenditures            |             |
| Depreciation & Amortization      | 1,455,404   |
| Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets | 63,777      |
| Total Non-Cash Expenditures      | 1,519,181   |

\*2016 Cash balance included \$1,140,493 restricted for Federal Grant programs, \$539,969 restricted for the Rural Fire Revolving Loan program, \$43,868 restricted for General Improvement Projects, \$1,180,100 restricted for repayment of potential Federal liabilities, \$3,036,392 restricted reserve in the Trust Fund, and \$81,951 restricted for private grant activities, leaving \$1,807,976 unrestricted Special Revenue and \$1,498 unrestricted General Revenue for use in operations.



Razorback Crew



Protecting, Developing, and Conserving Arkansas's Forests



Forestry Day at the Capitol

## Media/Special Events Update

AFC personnel are dedicated to keeping the public and media informed through print/online resources, and presentations, training, and partnerships with an array of local, state, and federal partners.

### Print Resources

Fact sheets and press releases are distributed to the public and made available on the website to inform about public safety and/or primary functions of the AFC. In 2016, press releases were distributed during high wildfire danger, to announce invasive forest pests, to announce Champion Trees, and to highlight AFC partnerships and accomplishments. Fact Sheets were created to inform Arkansans about Emerald Ash Borer, Career FAQs for the AFC, and wildfire prevention. The AFC works to provide brochures for the agency overall, as well as special program areas including Seedlings, Urban Forestry, Best Management Practices, and others. Newly developed in 2016 - the Jr. Wildland Firefighter Guide is a workbook program for 2nd-5th grade audiences to provide an overview of the mission of the AFC; causes, prevention, and suppression of Arkansas wildfires; forest facts; and prescribed fire. Finally, the AFC continues to maintain the *Trees of Arkansas* publication, which is a primary resource for identifying common Arkansas trees, and is used by schools, professionals, partners, and others.



Jr. Wildland Firefighter Program  
at Ouachita County

### Online Resources

The AFC maintains a comprehensive website with updated resources, contact information, and safety information for forest protection and forest management. All print resources are linked there, as are daily Wildfire Danger updates, Burn Ban updates, Seedling availability, and more. Social media is also used to communicate with the public, and is highly popular due to the high volume of photos and updates provided by field personnel from across the state. Because of the excellent work being accomplished, and captured by photographs for posting on Twitter and Facebook, AFC social media continues to climb: In 2016, AFC Facebook increased from 13,619 followers to 15,864 followers. Twitter increased from 5,755 to 6,722 followers.

### Partnerships/Special Events

AFC personnel around the state participate in activities including forestry competitions, wildfire prevention and Smokey Bear programs, seedling giveaways, training events, civic presentations, and more to represent the mission of the AFC. In 2016, AFC personnel again assisted with Prescribed Fire School, Arkansas Fire Boat School, Tree Farm programs across the state, Arbor Day events, STOP Programs, Safety Days, Southern Group of State Foresters meetings and events, Earth Day celebrations, and the lead-up to the 2017 legislative session, where the AFC participated in Arkansas Forestry Day at the Capitol with the Arkansas Forestry Association (in Jan, 2017).



### Congratulations to our 2016 Employees of the Year:

- Spencer Fox Award: Randy Cossey, Perry County
- Career Achievement Award: Joey Pittman, Poison Springs State Forest
- District Forester of the Year: Marc Phillips, District 8
- Program Manager of the Year: Chandler Barton, Forest Health
- Program Support of the Year: Trey Franks, District 1 and Daniel Craine, Communications
- Administrative Support: Krystel Newnum, Baucum Nursery
- District 1: Nick Bennett, Cleveland County
- District 2: Brian Mitchell, Pike County
- District 3: Kevin South, St. Francis County
- District 4: Marilyn Cearley, Administrative Specialist
- District 5: Randy Ellison, Saline County
- District 6: Benny Lowery, Franklin County
- District 7: Les Miller, Conway County
- District 8: Wes Morgan, Stone County



Joey Pittman



Randy Cossey



Marc Phillips





*The Arkansas Forestry Commission is a proud agency  
of the Arkansas Agriculture Department.*

[www.forestry.arkansas.gov](http://www.forestry.arkansas.gov)



Come see us! Find office locations across the state:

